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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: THE TAWAFUQ COALITION: A PORTRQT OF SUNNI
FRATRICIDE

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (S) The largest bloc of Sunni political parties, the "Tawafuq Front," is likely to fracture over internal feuding between its three senior leaders, tensions created by the prolonged negotiations to return Tawafuq to government, and positioning in the run-up to provincial elections. Relations between the bloc's most prominent figure, Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, and his colleague Khallaf Allyan, an Anbar tribal sheikh who heads the National Dialogue Council, have deteriorated to the point where further cooperation and conciliation are unlikely. According to Embassy contacts, the PM's office has fueled the rift by encouraging each side with offers of cabinet positions and other incentives. Allyan tells us that the damage is irreparable and that he is prepared to leave the Front soon. The just-begun registration period for political entities/parties to compete in upcoming provinial elections, he says, offers the opportunity to formalize the break-up. Iraqi Islamic Party contacts say they will not miss Allyan, and are confident that the PM has committed to returning the IIP along with Adnan Dulaymi's Iraqi People's Conference, as soon as negotiations on cabinet seats are concluded. In the interim, the Maliki government continues to function without an organized Sunni partner among its ranks. End summary.

Tawafuq to Finally Split?

¶2. (S) During a May 4 meeting with Poloff, Sheikh Khallaf Allyan confirmed reports that he was seriously considering departing from the Tawafuq Coalition of Sunni political parties, and joining forces with Saleh Mutlaq's Iraqi Front for National Dialogue and possibly others. He launched into a detailed tirade against his Tawafuq Partner Tareq al-Hashimi and the latter's Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), saying that his previous support and assistance to Hashimi had been betrayed. Hashimi, he said, made alliances with the Kurds and the Islamic Supreme Council (ISCI) without consulting him, and made numerous pronouncements on behalf of the Tawafuq coalition absent his consent. A long pattern of deception and double-dealing, he complained, marked the IIP and its dealings with its Tawafuq partners. Such behavior, he said, only resulted in the evaporation of popular support for the IIP -- an assertion he said could be validated by any survey or "fair" election. Hashimi, he said, had conspired with the Kurds and ISCI to bring down Maliki, while he and Mutlaq had recently pledged their support to Maliki in a private meeting with him. Entreaties by Poloff to repair the rift with Hashimi and form a united negotiating bloc with his Tawafuq partners to deal with PM Maliki appeared futile.

Negotiations With the PM

13. (S) According to a senior IIP political advisor to VP Hashimi, a list of nominations for nine cabinet positions was presented within the past week to PM Maliki by the IIP and its allies from Dulaymi's group. Once Hashimi returns to Baghdad, he said, on or about May 5, talks with Maliki will put the final touches on these "near-concluded" negotiations. Allyan, he said, was a "thug" with no vision and no ability, who wanted only to use his position for his own personal gain (Note: an Advisor to Parliament Speaker Mashadani told Poloff that Allyan was privately auctioning to the highest bidder his two Ambassadorial nominations, apportioned within Tawafuq, and was interested in gaining cabinet positions to "steal as much as he can." End note). Allyan told Poloff that he had presented his own list of proposed cabinet nominees to Maliki's advisors Sadiq Rikabi and Mohamed Salman on May 3, proposing a selection of three names for each of six cabinet seats, consisting of Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish nominees. Among that list, he said, was the nomination of Saleh Mutlaq for Deputy Prime Minister. The separate list of names (for nine cabinet seats) recently presented to the PM by the IIP and Dulaymi, he complained, had not been approved by him and did not contain his nominations (Note: PM staffer Ahmed Shames told Poloff on May 3 that the PM could not agree to cabinet positions for the "Tawafuq Coalition" since there were two separate lists of names. There would have to be one agreed list, he said, signed by Hashimi, Dulaymi, and Allyan before the PM could decide. End note).

New Registration Rules for Political Parties

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14. (S) Allyan said that newly announced rules on registration of political parties would commence on May 5. The Tawafuq Front, even as an established bloc, was required to re-register in order to compete in upcoming provincial elections. This process, he noted, would provide the opportunity to reconfigure the Tawafuq bloc and allow him and his group to part ways from the IIP and to join a new coalition with other groups. (Note: some of his parliamentarian group have indicated privately that they would not depart the coalition and follow Allyan. End Note). There are groups within the Parliament, he said, which are quietly studying formation of new coalitions and blocs to compete in coming elections. His vision for a new political entity, he said, was for a non-secular, non-religious party, dedicated to national unity, friendly relations with Iraq's neighbors, and a professional military not infested with militia members and manipulated by Iran. Salah Mutlaq's Hewan party was pressing a similar platform, and was reaching out to the Sadrists and other "nationalist" groupings to combine energies (Note: Mutlaq told Poloff on May 2, following a visit to his home town of Fallujah the day before, that he was interested in "splitting" the Sadrist camp and attracting to his side the non-violent, non-Iranian-supported wing of the Trend. He requested Embassy support for his bid to become Deputy Prime Minister, hinting that Iran was busy courting disaffected Sunnis, including Adnan Dulaymi, himself, and others. End Note.)

Comment

15. (S) A break-up of the Tawafuq Front, in and of itself, is not necessarily a bad thing, particularly if Allyan (the least productive and most obstreperous of the three leaders) is the one who departs. Agreement between Hashimi and Maliki on the return of ministers to the cabinet would also be a step forward, and we are working to facilitate this. More broadly, this intra-Sunni wrangling serves to highlight the growing acceptance among the Sunni political class of the constitutional political process -- a huge shift from their

largely self-defeating boycott of the January 2005 elections.

Presuming that their expectations are managed, that the election process is ostensibly fair, and that the useful competition over ideas/ideology does not turn violent, this trend should continue as we move toward national elections at the end of 2009. Iran, we can assume, will do all it can to sow discord and keep the Sunni groups feuding and weak. End comment.

Bio Addendum

¶6. (S) Sheikh Khallaf Allyan Khalaf al-Dulaimi al-Khirbett, a tribal leader from the city of Ramadi in Anbar Province, claims to have previously been a Colonel in the Iraqi Army. In 1980, he told Poloff, he abandoned the military after being discovered among a group of soldiers plotting against Saddam Hussein. He claims that were he still in the Iraqi Army, his rank would be Lieutenant General.
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